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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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09/940,764

08/27/2001

Abhay V. Parasnis

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EXAMINER

HAQ, NAEEM U

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3625

SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD OF RESPONSE	MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
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3 MONTHS

02/21/2007

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire 6 MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/940,764

Applicant(s)

PARASNIS ET AL.

Examiner

Naeem Haq

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 02 November 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-31 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 2-4, 7-9, 11-13, 16-18, 20-22 and 25-27 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1, 5, 6, 10, 14, 15, 19, 23, 24, and 28-31 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 9/3/2002.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

Applicants' election of claims 1, 5, 6, 10, 14, 15, 19, 23, 24, and 28-31 in the reply filed on November 2, 2006 is acknowledged. Because applicant did not distinctly and specifically point out the supposed errors in the restriction requirement, the election has been treated as an election without traverse (MPEP § 818.03(a)).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

Claims 1-9, 28, and 29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. These claims are directed to an RFQ "engine". It is unclear to the examiner what statutory class of invention Applicant's "engine" is intended to embrace. The classes of invention currently recognized by the Office are as follows: process, machine, article of manufacture, composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof (see 35 U.S.C. 101). In its reasonably broad sense, an "engine" can be construed as either an apparatus (i.e. machine) or software (i.e. an article of manufacture). Since the Applicants' specification does not provide a clear definition or clearly show the boundaries of the "engine", these claims

are rendered indefinite. Furthermore, claims 1 and 29 recite the limitations "data and metrics meta-model", "state transition meta-model", and "workflow meta-model". It is unclear to the examiner what these terms mean.

Referring to claim 28: This claim invokes 112, 6th paragraph by reciting a series of "means plus function" language. However, the Applicants' specification discloses that the "structure" being relied upon to perform the action is nothing more than software (see specification page 8, lines 30-32; page 9, lines 15-17; page 12, lines 6-8). It is unclear to the examiner how software can constitute a "system".

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101

35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

Claims 1-9, 28, and 29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter.

As noted above in the 112, second paragraph rejection, an "engine" can be construed as either an apparatus or software. If claims 1 and 29 are directed to an apparatus then the examiner notes that the body of the claim recites nothing more than a series of computer code. Computer code, by itself, does not represent anything physical or tangible that would constitute an apparatus. Accordingly, the "apparatus" of claims 1 and 29 fails to recite any structure. On the other hand, if claims 1 and 29 are directed to an article of manufacture (i.e. software) then the examiner notes that the

body of these claims recite a series of functional descriptive material that does not impart functionality to a computer because it is not embodied on a computer-readable medium (See MPEP 2106(IV)(B)(1)). For these reasons, claims 1-9 and 29 are directed to non-statutory subject matter.

Referring to claim 28: This claim invokes 112, 6th paragraph by reciting a series of "means plus function" language. However, the Applicants' specification discloses that the "structure" being relied upon to perform the action is nothing more than software (see specification page 8, lines 30-32; page 9, lines 15-17; page 12, lines 6-8). The examiner that software (i.e. computer code) is not a physical or tangible structure, and it cannot be relied upon to define a "system".

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1, 5, 6, 10, 14, 15, 19, 23, 24, and 28-31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gardner et al. (US 5,758,327) ("Gardner") in view of Adams et al. (7,117,165 B1) ("Adams").

Referring to claims 1, 5, 6, 10, 14, 15, 19, 23, 24, and 28-31: Gardner teaches a request for quote engine comprising: a data and metrics designer operable to generate, in response to input from a user, a data and metrics model for an RFQ template using a

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data and metrics meta-model. The Applicant's specification teaches that the data and metrics designer can be "... *tailored to capture selected structured and unstructured data relating to an RFQ or other business process.*" (see specification page 7, lines 11-13). The Applicant's specification also teaches that the data and metrics model can include "... *details relating to the RFQ (such as product or service requirements, due dates, and participation rules and restrictions), demand data (such as the required quantity of a product or service over a period of time), and various attachments (such as a design document, legal terms, and shipping/logistics details).* As can be seen from these examples, the collected data may be structured (for example, the delivery date may be entered in a specific format and the price may be entered in a particular currency) and/or unstructured (for example, an attachment such as a text document)." (see specification page 7, lines 15-22.

Gardner teaches requisition rules that may require an attachment (col. 2, lines 57-61; col. 3, lines 18-31). Gardner also teaches a state transition designer operable to generate, in response to input from the user, a state transition model for the RFQ template using a state transition meta-model. The Applicant's specification teaches the state transition designer and model can be "... *tailored by a business to execute an appropriate sequence and type of communications between the business and a supplier regarding a RFQ generated by the business.*" (see specification page 3, lines 26-29; page 8, lines 4-8). Gardner teaches that the requisition rules include an authorization matrix that identifies a person-to-person sequence for the requisition (col. 3, lines 32-43). Finally, Gardner teaches an execution engine operable to execute the RFQ template comprising the data and metrics model generated by the data and metrics designer, the state transition model generated by the state transition designer, the RFQ template being executed to generate an RFQ (col. 7, lines 12-17). Gardner does not teach a workflow designer

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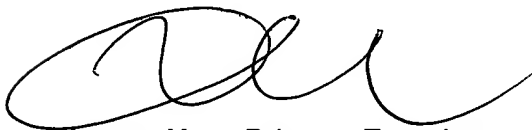
operable to generate, in response to input from the user, a user interface workflow for the RFQ template using a workflow meta-model. However, the Applicant's specification teaches that interface workflow designer "...*may be configured to provide a "wizard" interface that takes the users through a series of easy to follow steps to complete an RFQ or to evaluate responses to an RFQ.*" (see specification page 8, lines 21-24). Adams, on the other hand, teaches an operating resource management system that allows a user of the system to use a "wizard" to prepare a requisition (col. 3, lines 9-56). Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, at the time the invention was made, to incorporate the wizard of Adams into the invention of Gardner. One of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to do so in order to guide a user through a series of questions at each step, providing navigational aids to keep track of the big picture, and presenting lists of choices whenever possible instead of asking the employee to type things in, as taught by Adams (col. 7, lines 29-33). Finally, the examiner notes that the Applicant's specification discloses that the terms "request for quote" and "RFQ" refer not only to request for quotes, "...*but to any other appropriate business transactions originated by an originating entity 4 and communicated to a responding entity 6 for a response that addresses one or more parameters of the business transition specified by originating entity 4.*" (see specification page 6, lines 7-11). Based on this description, the examiner notes that a requisition is equivalent to an RFQ.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Naeem Haq whose telephone number is (571)-272-6758. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8:00am-5:00pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jeffrey A. Smith can be reached on (571)-272-6763. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.



Naeem Haq, Primary Examiner
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February 12, 2007